

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 46-52 are pending in this application. Claims 46-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Pipkin, Inc.'s Maxima Advantage System (herein "Pipkin") in view of U.S. patent 6,587,831 to O'Brien, U.S. patent 6,587,831 to Kenneth, and further in view of U.S. patent application publication 2002/0029160 A1 to Thompson et al. (herein "Thompson"). That rejection is traversed by the present response as discussed next.

Each of the independent claims is amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. Specifically, independent Claim 46 now clarifies the operation of the recruiting information distribution unit to recite:

a recruiting information distribution unit that identifies a time slot in which workforce shortages are occurring, derives a number of vacancies, and distributes an e-mail for recruiting a person to fill a workforce shortage occurring in the time slot according to the response information received by said response information receiving unit, to said mobile telephones of employees who belong to a group in question and who are not on the job during the time slot[.]

The other independent claims 51 and 52 are amended to recite similar features.

The features recited in the claims are believed to distinguish over the applied art.

The features recited in the claims are directed to allowing a work management system to efficiently set work schedules both for normal work operation and for special events, and that can generate and properly distribute a temporary shift table indicating the employee's set work schedule, and that can also efficiently recruit employees for any workforce shortages. According to the features recited in the claims, employees can be grouped, for example according to job types that employees can engage in, qualification, experience, etc. The system can identify any time slot in which workforce shortages are occurring, derive a number of vacancies, and distribute an e-mail for recruiting persons to fill workforce

shortages occurring in the time slot. The employees can then respond to such e-mails, and then a settled shift table can be generated and distributed.

With such a claimed operation the system of the present invention can target specific groups of employees to fill a specific time slot corresponding to workforce shortages. Based on the responses from the e-mail for recruiting persons to fill the workforce shortages for the specific time slot, a settled shift table can then be generated and again distributed by e-mail.

Applicants respectfully submit none of the cited art to Pipkin, O'Brien, Kenneth, or Thompson is directed to the claimed features for recruiting employees at a time at which workforce shortages are occurring for a specific time slot.

Neither Pipkin nor O'Brien disclose or suggest the operations of recruiting employees for a specific time slot corresponding to workforce shortages after setting up a temporary shift table. O'Brien merely discloses that when there is a request for a schedule change from a terminal of an employee (when an auction is to be held), other employees will be notified that a shift request will be auctioned. O'Brien, however, does not even disclose who will be notified of such a fact, and it appears that in O'Brien all other employees will be notified of that fact.

The outstanding rejection does now appear to cite Thompson with respect to distributing an e-mail for recruiting a person to fill a workforce shortage. In that respect applicants note Thompson describes a system operable to manage substitute workers, making use of human resources. However, applicants submit that what is performed by the system of Thompson appears to be merely a unilateral selection of workers.

The claimed invention is believed to differ from Thompson in that in the claimed invention a recruitment application is realized. More specifically, the claimed invention attains a recruitment application by sending an e-mail of a recruitment application to fulfill a workforce shortage occurring in a time slot, to employees who belong to a group in question

and who are not on the job during the time slot. That is, in the claimed invention the e-mail communication is not sent to all of the employees, but only to employees who belong to a specific group and who are off the job during the time slot, and thereby the e-mail communication can be more effective.

Applicants also note one basis for the rejection appears to cite Thompson to disclose distributing an e-mail including a temporary shift table to a plurality of mobile phones, citing Thompson at paragraphs [0066] and [0078].¹

In reply to that basis for the rejection applicants note Thompson in paragraphs [0066] and [0078] merely indicates that client organizations must register with the substitute fulfillment system 10, and that absence notifications are distributed. Neither of those disclosures in Thompson is directed to e-mailing a full “temporary shift table” to mobile phones. Thereby, that further basis for the rejection is traversed.

In view of the present response applicants respectfully submit amended independent claims 46, 51, and 52, and the claims dependent therefrom, positively recite features neither taught nor suggested by the applied art. Thus, claims 46-52 are believed to be allowable.

¹ Office Action of March 8, 2007, page 10, lines 11-12.

In view of the present response applicants respectfully submit the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

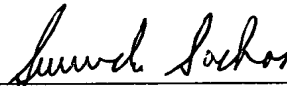
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